

"A kind of stone, coralline in origin but of relatively dense, even texture and crystalline appearance, is obtained under water at a single location on the seaward side of the reef a little west of the pass, near the uninhabited island Ellā. From this are made pounders (faulipō), which are used by the women to mash taro and breadfruit. The pounders are of the same general shape as those of Polynesia. They have rounded vertical handles which flare outward at both ends: slightly at the top, to form a knob; much more at the bottom, forming a heavy base with round, slightly convex pounding surface. (See photograph, Fig.) Those used on Ifalik are comparatively small, perhaps because it is hard to find larger pieces of the stone without cracks or flaws. Most of them are about 8 inches high and 5 inches in diameter at the base. [28]

The workmanship is rough and simple. The only decoration seen consists of one or two little bosses left projecting on top of the handle. Pounders are made by either men or women. The implement used nowadays to make them is an old hatchet head without a handle. Holding the stone in the left hand and the hatchet head in the right, the craftsman hacks out crisscross lines on the places to be cut down, particularly what is to become the handle. Then he chips off the squares left projecting between the lines; pecks them off, rather, for most of the stone comes away as dust instead of chips. When the shape has been roughed out, the surface is finished by rubbing with another piece of stone. It is slow work. An elderly woman was seen busy at one nearly every morning for about two weeks."

"The beach sandstone (p¹erou) found in ledges on the reef between high and low water mark is known to be harder and stronger than coral. But the people have few uses for it. The corner posts of a single building, the men's house, are of perou. Slabs long enough for this use are hard to find, still harder to haul into place. Their only advantage over wooden posts is that they do not rot in the ground. Four slabs, apparently once corner posts, are all that is left of the men's house that once stood just inland from the present site. The stone posts of the men's house, which itself symbolizes the authority of the chiefs, are symbols of strength and permanence. This is brought out in the name of one of the men's religious dances, s^ur perou (stone house post). The idea seems to be that everything rests on that firm base.

Slabs of perou, which has a smoother, straighter surface than coral, are used for the top course of the walls that surround the stone piers. An occasional one is seen as a backrest (mageru) on a house platform."